THE BURUSHO OF HUNZA

342 The Hunza dwelling house is a fortress-like cube of stone and mud whose front door is screened from the hostile outer air by a barn,

102

342 the door of whic... is strategically placed at right angles to, and some
354 distance from, the main door. The only ventilation is the central
171 smoke-hole of highly elaborate construction, three wooden frames

1: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1938 AV7 Burusho AV7

[17] diagonally superimposed on each other, exactly duplicating some of
354 the ancient smoke-holes recently unearthed in Central Asia by Le
342 Coq. A large store-room about 6 feet deep runs the full width and height of the house and is entered by a door at the back of the central atrium. It is provided with a minute, unglazed, shuttered window, the only ' window ' known in Hunza except in the houses of the Mir
352 and the Wazir. The furnishings of the living room are simple but
513 adequate. Two large sleeping benches, some 7 feet wide and 9 feet
354 long, flank the side walls, and are raised 18 inches or so above the floor. The sleepers roll themselves in homespun blankets or padded quilts and sleep crosswise on the bench like parallel sausage rolls. One bench is reserved for men and the other for women. The hearth occupies the centre of the floor and is outlined by four stone kerbs. The sleeping benches, which serve by day as sitting places, are screened at head and foot by capacious cupboards, one of which serves the mistress of the house for her kneading trough and other utensils, another takes the form of a large bin with sub-divisions to hold the current supply of flour.

415 The normal cooking pots and oil vessels, lamp cruses, etc., are of
324 hollowed soap-stone, often of gracefully irregular shape, reflecting that of the boulder from which they have been hewn. Gourds furnish
322 the usual ' jugs ', and wooden bowls, nowadays frequently turned on a lathe, the eating vessels. Wooden spoons and ladles are cut in one piece,
177 the handles being formed by a convenient branch or twig. The delightful result is that no two pots, bowls, or spoons, are identical in size or shape. Unfortunately aluminium or enamelled iron vessels and galvanized buckets are finding their way into the country. We ourselves were, I fear, guilty of adding to their number and even introducing a few multi-service kerosene tins.

241 The greater number of field implements are still of wood, though
412 the ploughshares are now usually shod with an iron shoe or tip, and a lucky family may have acquired an iron spade or hoe or a five-pronged
563 iron fork. A small community of ultimately Indian origin, the Béricho,
326 lives amongst the Burusho and supplies the music for their polo and dancing and the blacksmithery of their simple ironwork: the shears, the rude sickle, the sharpened scrap of iron that serves as razor.

[412] The sharpened stone or ibex horn, which till very recently served
335 for all necessary carpentry, is now replaced by the iron-headed adze
342 which hacks out the steps on the log ladder and shapes the narrow planks for doors and cupboards. The true Hunza door consists of a set of

THE BURUSHO OF HUNZA

these narrow planks placed side by side and pierced by horizontal holes through which two parallel rods are threaded ; the hinge is a longer piece of wood pointed at both ends and rotating into holes in threshold and lintel ; while the whole is secured by an ingenious wooden lock. Most villages, however, now possess a carpenter or two, trained in the P.W.D. workshop at Gilgit and armed with plane and saw, who can produce more Europeanized doors and cupboards, to the greater comfort of their owners and the selfish regret of the anthropologist. The old, home-made door is still in use for barn and byre.

Every peasant family is almost entirely self-supporting and independent, eating the produce of its own laboriously and beautifully terraced fields (PLATE I), wearing the woollen cloaks and caps spun and woven from the wool of its own sheep, and booted from the skin of its own beasts. The only foreign garments worn are the cotton shirts and trousers of comparatively recent introduction, now considered indispensable by both sexes, and the merry little cotton caps, plain or silk-embroidered, which have replaced the heavy woollen salvation-army bonnet of the women. Butter is made and water carried in skins ; grain and flour are carried in skin-bags or sacks and stored in skin-sacks or wooden bins. Rugs, saddlebags and ropes are woven of goat's hair.

In a country where no unirrigated tree can grow, timber is very scarce. An old apricot or appletree is sometimes available, or the root of an old vine, otherwise the only general timber is the poplar, grown primarily for poles and rafters, and the willow, absolutely essential for baskets (PLATE II), a dozen varieties of which are needed for carrying apricots, manure, dry leaves, straw etc., and for storing potatoes and dried fruit.

The soil of Hunza is unimaginably poor, consisting in fact of little but powdered-up mountain side. The scarcity of water means also the non-existence of pasture, and the few animals that can be fed eke out a spartan existence on the scraps of grass growing on the rare semi-irrigated strips of hillside or beside the water-channels, and on such weeds amongst the growing crops as are not earmarked for human consumption or remain after the crops have been reaped. This scanty provision is supplemented by the autumn harvest of dry leaves (not one of which lies on the ground ungarnered), the straw and stubble, and occasionally a small quantity of dried grass. Only a few families command enough land and water to grow a little lucerne for fodder. The most livestock that the average household of 10 to 20 persons

186 A note of bitterness crept into the Hunza voices. Whereas
224 Hunza permits the Nagirkuts to cross the river and help
798 themselves free to Hunza stones, the Nagir people levy a tax
563 on all stones taken from their side. So our folk averred; but
578 very probably we should hear the tale reversed if we spoke to Nagir millers on the subject. For the Burusho of Hunza and Nagir, though they speak the same language, are of different race and mentality, and understand each other as little as the Saxon and the so-called Celt, and the rivalry of centuries divides them. At one point they both professed the Shiah faith, but since the Hunzukuts some four or five generations ago adopted the Ismaili (or "Maulai") heresy religious differences have added to their ever-wakeful mutual hostility.

000 Quitting these contentious subjects, we essayed some photographs by the water's edge and turned sharp to mount a side-gorge and reach the level of the cliff road above, by the steepest thing calling itself a path you ever saw. The new Minapin ponies were happily sturdier than the rocking-horses, and managed to climb almost vertically for 600 feet or so. A
●342 brisk torrent, which is most of the time a waterfall, pours
361 down the gorge[1] the sides of which are lined with trees and grass, and the track runs right through a most picturesque little village called Tishót. The stone houses are almost indistinguishable from the rocks against which they are built, one here, one 20 feet above, just wherever they can be got to stick.
000 The ponies took the four-foot steps from boulder to boulder as if they had been taught circus riding up and down the Great Pyramid. I never professed to be a horsewoman, and I don't know the orthodox way of staying in the saddle when my pony's back is perpendicular, so I shamelessly wound my right hand in his flowing mane, pressed the stirrups back, and lurched triumphantly to the top. When we emerged on to the fan above we felt so virtuous after the climb that we halted to drink tea, though we had only done four miles and had not really deserved it. Our usual routine on these slow marches was to divide the day's ride into three: have thermos tea at one-third and lunch at two-thirds the distance, and thus let Shafi get well ahead to be preparing the evening meal.

[1] [of the Hunza River -- Analyst]

Chapter 12

SETTLING IN

July 1934.

485 342 THIS Aliábád bungalow is a good deal bigger than the ordinary rest-house, for it was enlarged to make room for a resident Assistant Political Agent (whose post after a year was found unnecessary), and then two further rooms were added on to accommodate on occasion the Political Agent himself (who never stays there). There is a good-sized dining-room, with pantry behind; a double bedroom with a bow window; two single bedrooms; three bathrooms of the primitive dak-bungalow variety of course (one of which we at once earmarked for a "dark-room"), and a really handsome sitting-room with another bow window; finally—an unexpected and welcome luxury—a store-room with plenty of good shelves where we could stack our modest supply of stores and all our spare stationery. At the back there are the usual kitchen, servants' quarters, "stables," and what not. Everything was most scrupulously clean when we arrived, and for this we had to thank the forethought of our good friend the Mir. It happened that our old "head-boy," Nazar (already mentioned), was up from Gilgit on leave at his home in Aliábád, and the Mir bade him take charge and get the house ready as he thought we should like it.

000 He gladly took over for a few days from Dádo, whom we sent off to see his people. The poor boy came back to find that his mother and his grandmother had died during his absence. This hit him hard, and when we stammered our sympathy he murmured: "It is God's will." We were glad to hear that he has a wife and baby boy to cheer him. To show how much we appreciated his devotion on the journey up—which had far

2:Lorimer:T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

342
142 PLATE VII
291

Group on roof of No. 1 watching passers-by in street below. Small boy is carrying baby on his back of whom nothing is visible but tiny fists on brother's shoulders.

(See Chap. 16)

[Facing P. 88]

Chapter 16

HOME LIFE AT No. 1

293 WHEN the women are working in the fields through the heat
[132] of the day—and it is very, very hot at 7,800 feet with a tem-
854 perature of 105° in the shade—they usually have a large square
482 of cotton cloth with them, which they sometimes throw over their heads for protection. This cloth turns in for all sorts of purposes; if you are carrying a small quantity of flour home from the mill you can wrap it up and tie it across from one shoulder to the other armpit and so keep both hands free. If the baby is too small to sit safely on your back or shoulders, you treat it in the same way. In fact, if you see a woman with this kind of bundle that appears to have two lumps in it you may safely guess that it's a baby.

• 342 I made great friends with the family who worked just below us (I have named them in my notebook Household No. 1), and I felt quite sad when their wheat harvest was over—it was so convenient just to run down and join them in sight of our own windows. They asked me, however: "Won't you come home and sit in our shade?" Of course I accepted with delight. It was just a few steps along the Dála and down one of the little lanes, half path, half watercourse. We came to a slightly taller, mud-plastered wall on the left with a wooden door in it. Through this I stepped in to a tiny courtyard with a shed on each side, one for straw and one for the lambs and kids. The
[333] house itself is just a rough cube of stones plastered with mud, and it has a flat roof with a smoke-hole in it above the central hearth. You go up by a ladder, and the roof makes a nice place for sitting out, watching the neighbours go by, spinning, and drying apricots. It has a second store-room built on a part of

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

342 it, exactly over the main store-room below. There is no parapet, only a tiny raised rim to direct the rain into a small gutter-hole, on the rare occasions when there is rain; but it has a fringe of cut thorn bushes arranged round the edge to prevent an enterprising goat jumping across from the next-
351 door roof not many feet away. I didn't, however, go up on to
296 the roof, but on into a larger courtyard where there was a pool in the corner at which their washing is done. They would not dream of polluting the running water by washing themselves or their clothes in it as it flows by; they draw off what they want for these purposes into a separate pond of their own.
351 Then under a large shady tree there was a raised stone plat-
513 form which acts as a "sofa" by day and as a double or treble or quadruple bed by night—for, except in the depth of winter, nobody sleeps indoors. There was another raised platform, with a wall at the back and open in front and sides, roofed in for another sleeping place. It had a railing along under the roof, and over this were hung all sorts of padded quilts, homespun
[136] blankets, sheepskins, etc.—the family bedding. All the bedding is taken out and hung up every day, which helps to account for the complete lack of vermin—which I confess came to us as a happy surprise. In all our year in Hunza we saw only *one* flea, and that, as David said, was emphatically our own!

245 Round the corner from these sleeping places I got into a
312 walled-in shady garden full of fruit trees—apples, mulberries, peaches, apricots, and vines. It is incredible how luxurious mere *shade* is at such a temperature. It wasn't remotely like a garden in our sense. The earth was bare without one blade of grass or green, and was all cut up into little beds round each precious tree, with banks between them, so that the water could be directed to each tree as desired, when it was No. 1's
514 turn to have water at all. In the far corner of the garden was
343 a neat little circular "open-air pulpit." We had seen these pulpits dotted about, but—stupidly—did not at once guess what they were for. Coming straight from Kashmir, where the approach to each homestead is ankle deep in filth, or remembering Arab habits in Iráq, we never expected that we should find in Hunza a people as scrupulously decent as ourselves in

ment departments, act as postal runners or dispensary assistants, do part-time jobs as "levies," or enter the private employment of British officers. Travel where you will in the Agency, some enterprising Hunza man is there before you, as carpenter or washerman, as touring merchant or in Government employ. You may even meet an old Hunza taxi-driver in Bombay or a Hunza *chaprassi* in Lahore.

At first the Mir rather discouraged these farther-afield adventures, and not unwisely. New ideas, new customs, new dress, imported from abroad might well upset the happy balance of the home civilization; but the increasing pressure of population—a dubious benefit the *Pax Britannica* is wont to bring—makes some outlet necessary for ambitious youth, and some supplement necessary for home support, and the Mir's policy has been modified accordingly. With rare exceptions the travellers' hearts remain in their Hunza highlands; they go for a few years and return with newly acquired skill, with a set of carpenter's tools it may be, with a smoothing-iron or a sewing machine, to resume work on the family farm and earn a little "on the side."

We heard that a new house was being built by a certain Kalbi (not the Levy; one of another clan) and were invited to go down—some hundreds of feet—and see it in its half-finished state. "It must cost a lot to build a new house," we said. "How did you come to have money enough to spare?" "Well, you see, I have two sons away working—thank God." And, in fact, except in the few cases where the Hunza man goes over-far afield to Bombay or the Panjab, and needs his own earnings to support a down-country family, the Hunza son remits home every spare anna, knowing well that it will be spent on the home he himself will presently enjoy and share. When he comes back on leave he brings his mother an aluminium cooking-pot or basin to jostle the stone *balosh* and wooden bowl, or an iron bucket which incongruously companions the local gourd when his sisters go to draw the drinking water.

In theory there are any number of sizes and patterns of house which you can build in Hunza: the cow-pattern, the ant-pattern, and half a dozen more, but in actual fact there are

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

exactly two—the old Hunza pattern and the new so-called Wakhi pattern. Most of the Áltít and Báltít houses are, for obvious reasons, of the older type—that designed no doubt by the three original Greeks!—most of the Aliábád houses are of the second, for Aliábád is a new place. Water was only coaxed on to it three or four generations ago; before which it was just barren mountain side with a light sprinkling of thorn jungle.

Having decided on the pattern and proportions of a new house, every peasant family is capable of tracing the foundations and rearing the walls and roof; neighbours will lend a hand, at this as at any other job, asking no fee but a meal when they are working and some return of help another day. In olden days the family, wielding the invaluable adze (when this succeeded the earlier ibex-horn), was competent to rough-hew its doors and cupboards, its posts and rafters. But in more recent years the "standard of living" has risen, and this shows distinctly in indoor architecture. If he can at all afford it, the house-builder will now call in a carpenter-neighbour to put finishing touches of superior excellence. The rough doors of the byres are still picturesquely home-made of adze-hewn poplar slices, threaded on two wooden cross rods and revolving on a spiked wooden post which turns in two rough sockets, but the house doors and cupboards are sawn and panelled, planed and hinged and fitted, to the increased comfort of the inhabitants—and the sorrow of the antiquarian. When we had reached Kalbi's house a cheery carpenter was hard at work sitting on the floor with shavings and sawdust round him, fashioning the elaborate, quadruple frame that forms the smoke-hole. We stayed a while and David wrote up notes about the various woods preferred, and dimensions of the various parts, and took photographs of the interior.

A little later one Mírbán offered to let us inspect his newly finished house before the family moved in. We rode a mile or so along the Báltít road, then turned up a steep, twisting, boulder-strewn lane till a new-fangled wooden door gave entrance to a short of irregular compound with three or four houses in it. The new one looked exactly like the others, for

342 after a day or two the stone-and-mud walls have dried to the same appearance of timeless indestructibility as those of fifty or one hundred years ago. We passed first, as always, through a small byre, not yet inhabited by its cow; then at right angles through a dark, narrow passage 5 or 6 feet long, and then through the low hall-door into the house itself. Your main object in building a house at all is to be as warm and free from draughts as possible during the "Great Cold," and no one in his senses would let his hall-door open straight on to the wind-swept mountain side. Hence the byre ante-room, which not only defeats the direct outside air, but contributes something of animal warmth to the human warmth within.

291 281 352 When we emerged into the living-room (the *atrium*, as it were), beautifully bright with light from the smoke-hole, we were standing in a shallow trough below the floor level where the newcomer kicks off his muddy boots in winter. Most people at all well-to-do wear soft home-made boots up to their knees in winter-time. But skins are precious and, however cold the weather, they take their boots *off* to save them when they come to an extra rough bit of ground. This entrance place has in it the "musicians' bench," under which are stored the family basin and similar utensils and on which is piled a store of firewood.

342 [352] The floor of the room is a small square of hard-beaten earth which in this gloriously dry climate remains admirably clean; and roughly in the centre of it is a shallow hole, edged with four stone kerbs, which is the hearth. Behind the hearth is a low bench sacred to the lady of the house, the presiding genius 343 of indoors. Beside it she sits to do or superintend the cooking 251 and behind her is a low wooden door opening into the store-[414] room; the home-made wooden key of which hangs always on her person. The store-room runs the whole width and height of the house. It has need to be a roomy place, for here stand the skin sacks of grain, the heaped baskets of potatoes, apples, dried mulberries and apricots, the kernels, the wool, the stone wine-jars, the jars of apricot oil, the basket of savoury herbs—all the family's supplies for a twelvemonth, which it is her duty to guard and to apportion.

LAND AND HOUSES IN HUNZA

As you enter, you turn your eyes left and with your free 342
right hand salute the master of the house and wish him peace. [576]
You will find him seated on a spacious dais raised well above 352
the earthen floor and comfortably carpeted with goats' hair rugs of his own weaving, or it may be with felt carpets from Kashgar. The left-hand wall of the dark passage through which you have entered screens the end of this recessed dais, and is lined with a capacious cupboard reaching to the ceiling. At the head of the dais is a gigantic wooden bin, divided into chambers each with its separate lid, in which the various kinds of flour are stored as they are ground for use: barley, wheat, millets, and buckwheats. The dais itself is 6 or 7 feet wide and 10 or 12 feet long, the men's sitting place by day and the major sleeping bench by night. Each person has his own set of 352
bedding—padded quilts or homespun blankets—in which he 513
rolls himself like a sausage. The sleepers lie crosswise on the bench, which is wide enough to let them stretch full length, and when neatly packed for the night eight or ten can be comfortably accommodated. On the opposite side of the room is 352
the minor bench, equally roomy, but an inch or two less raised, which is the women's sitting place by day, and at night the sleeping bench for women and children. It also has a built-up cupboard at the foot, and at the head, corresponding to the large flour bin, the housewife's spacious "yeast-cupboard" in which she keeps her kneading trough and rolling-pin, her cooking-pots and what not. Its door is at her left hand as she sits on her cross-bench, and the top of it serves as general shelf, table, and "dresser." A more admirable scheme of 342
architecture, better suited to the family's needs, would be 352
difficult to devise. The complete absence of windows gives a sense of security and cosiness; the complete absence of senseless "furniture" gives a delightful feeling of space and peace and leisure, and makes you want to go home and make a bonfire of your tables and chairs. How much more we have lost than gained by learning to sit on chairs and losing the pliability of joint that makes squatting natural. How much unnecessary domestic slavery goes to our "housework." Every 356
morning the Hunza women take the family rugs and bedding

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

belonging to a family in which Prince Ghazan Khán had been fostered, and who had thus acquired the extra land, etc., which is the recognized recompense for fostering royalty. We supposed that it was a desire to live up to this distinguished new connection (possibly it was a stipulation of the bride's people) that prompted his intention to set the young son, Kamber, up in a house of his own instead of bringing the new wife to share the parents' home.

Whatever lay behind this departure from custom, Nadíro sent his Hérul Nisa one day to tell me that he was setting out to "smite his poplars" if I would care to come. It was a *very* hot morning and I was deep in something else, but of course you'd never see anything if you weren't ready to take chances as they turn up. So I shouldered my camera and tripod, seized my long walking-stick (which is a great aid to climbing walls or leaping down them), on which I had made notches every foot to serve for measuring distances, and set off with Hérul Nisa. "Where is father's poplar garden?" I asked. The Aliábád people have a bewildering way of possessing odd scraps of ground dotted about all over the place, just according as they have taken up one plot or another of the sometime royal land. "Oh, quite near," she said. Everything is "quite near" to these active people, who think less of a 500-foot climb than we think of running a hundred yards to the pillar-box at the corner. It was, in fact, a hot, vertical half-mile over the roughest ground without even a track. Here on a rugged patch of stony, steep-sloping ground, carefully walled in, I found the whole of No. 8 and several neighbours busily setting about the felling job. One man scrambled up and attached a rope near the top of the fated tree. Two or three laid hold of the rope and stood at some distance to pull in the right direction, while the old Ustád himself skilfully hacked a triangular bite out of the trunk near to the ground and then axed away. It was only a few minutes till the slender poplar crashed down. Then Kamber and his friends hacked off the few remaining uppermost branches—the lower ones had been cut long ago—and the womenfolk and young people all clustered along the trunk to peel off the bark, taking care to get it off in strips as long

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

and wide as possible; for bark strips are useful for many things. Some of the flakes were 3 or 4 feet long and 8 or 9 inches wide. They would be kept to make large drum-like containers for storage purposes. While the men proceeded to deal with the next tree, the women and young people filled shoulder baskets with chips and twigs and branches and carried them home to store. "Lots of firewood for a long time to come," smiled Bibi Anjir to me gleefully as she limped away as fast and as surefooted as a girl, despite the stiff leg.

I helped, of course, with gathering up the firewood and the bark, but I was never allowed to shoulder a basket. I would have done it gladly enough many a time, but what with silly shoes (which always provoked my companions' sympathy: "It would be so much easier for you to walk safely barefoot, Mother"; I wondered, seeing that my incompetent, soft feet had been for half a century encased in foolish footgear!) and unpractised muscles a cross-country scramble unladen required all my attention. In any case, however, they would never hear of my carrying anything—"the Great must not do that," they said, and as we were enjoying so many privileges of "the Great," we had to pay the recognized penalties.

When the trees were all prostrate, I measured the effective poles that remained and found they ran from 50 to 60 feet: the original trees must have stood 60 or 70 feet high. The Ustád had put the saplings in himself when he walled and planted the "garden" twenty years or so before. Good timber like this is a sound investment. Sixteen good poplars go to the making of a house; up to twenty may be needed if they are smaller. If people are definitely quitting an old house for a new they will dismantle the former for the sake of rafters and cupboards, and you will occasionally see the shell of an old house standing derelict. But the cases of house-building which we actually came across were the hiving-off of son or brother and required new wood. A man who has no trees of his own to cut must, of course, buy them from some neighbour, and this, with the carpentry, will be the major expense.

The Ustád had already levelled the ground for the new house beside his own, and soon the trenches were dug for the foun-

342 dations, and the walls erected, every stone for which old Nadíro totted down the mountain side on his own back.

531 We often said to each other: "These Hunza people are no artists; that's one reason perhaps why they are so sensible and so like ourselves." But when we looked at the millions and myriads of stones that held their fields, each one in its place, and all fitted as neatly as a jigsaw puzzle, when we examined the lovely curves and tapering points of their five-pronged winnowing forks and the lashings of gut or sinew that bound them, we agreed that they were artists after all—in their own medium.

531 342 For many months we saw Nadíro spending every spare moment on the site, squaring and planing and trimming the posts and rafters, door-frames and cupboards that will be the pride of his posterity. He was lavishing great care on capitals, and ornamenting them and the lintels with fancy carvings. Except in the house of a special carpenter, carving is not indulged in in Hunza (a great contrast in this respect to Chitral, or even Yasin, where the Chitral tradition has penetrated). The few carved doors and windows that you see in the old forts and mosques at Áltít and Báltít probably date back to [346] the Balti craftsmen who built them. There is a little old mosque in Aliábád attractively carved, but no one could tell us for certain whether some foreign craftsman had done the work or local men. The ordinary peasant house, at any rate, has none—Hunza peasant architecture is essentially "functional."

P. 132

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

presence there. It was tantalizing to delay our return to headquarters; on the other hand, since in common courtesy the visit must some time be paid, we had promised to visit Nagir before returning to Aliábád, so we remained on the Nagir side of the river and proceeded to that gloomy, sunless capital.

At Minapin, the last stage before Hunza or Nagir, as the case might be, we were met by a laughing, bright-eyed boy, too genial to be a Nagir product: it was Haiyáto's son (one of three) who had come the fourteen miles to meet his father, explaining "I was heartsick for you and the horse, my father."

Ernest, Dádo, and Qudrat Ullah had never been in Nagir before, and were much amused at seeing Hunza from across the water. Everything *did* look odd, Aliábád beacon-tower very imposing above the empty, graveyard hill. Nagir is more spacious and richer than I had remembered. The fields are all slightly sloping and the revetting walls not nearly so high or so well-built as those of Hunza. The houses, like the Gilgit houses, are mainly built of sun-dried brick, and looked tidy and neat. Upper balconies are rare, and it seemed to me that the smoke-holes were much smaller and usually at one side of the roof, but the roofs appeared to have a parapet of a foot or so all round. The villages, so familiar in profile from the Hunza side, are much deeper than their appearance from the distance would suggest. The path from Sumair onwards up the Nagir gorge was very narrow, crumbly, and in poor repair, but looking at the texture of the cliffs it was not easy to see how anything radical could be done to improve it unless the course of it were entirely altered and carried much higher up and over the top of various bluffs and crags: an expensive engineering feat. Presently we came to an ugly *zhingát* on a long stretch of steep, almost fluid rubbish-heap slope—a place well remembered in my nightmares—across which the track, such as it was, was a bare 18 inches wide, and not even level at that. It is a good quarter of a mile; we took it on foot at the double, and were thankful to reach comparative safety at the other side, and see our horses and men follow without mishap. There is no shame in funking these things; the natives like them as little as we, and are as frank about it. Familiarity with a

No. XXIV.

The Khūrukuts and the Hamachāting.

In former times, they say, the Ulter grazing ground belonged to the Hamachāting. There was a road to Ulter up the Herāshūng above Bāltīt. This road used to do much damage to the land, (but the owners) were afraid to say anything to the Hamachāting about it. The Hamachāting were very powerful.

There was a woman called Shadun Kapūri, a wife of the Khūrukuts, and one day they made her sit down on the Herāshūng and said to her: "When the Hamachāting come from Ulter, jostle against them and then start shrieking out 'They have laid hands on me,' and we shall come (to your help)."

Presently the Hamachāting came down the Herāshūng carrying long juniper poles. Shadun Kapūri was on the road and they said to her: "Get out of the way!" She didn't budge. The Hamachāting are quick-tempered and one of them gave her a shove. On this she raised an outcry, shrieking: "May the crows eat them! They have laid hands on me." From one side and the other men ran up and caught hold of the Hamachāting and banged them about.

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7 *sti ks* — v. § 356. 2.

8 *dirbu* — *dir* is described as a "long branch", but the juniper has no branches to speak of. It is the main stems that are meant. Such timber, up to four or five inches in diameter, was formerly used as rafters for roofs. Cp. p. 214 l. 8.

000 view usually taken of the human abdomen, and that the y form denotes the belly as consisting of an assemblage of parts, intestines, stomach etc. — the aspect in which this portion of the body in animals is perhaps most earnestly regarded by people who do their own butcher work.

This theory seems to cover the single instance I have recorded in which the y form is used with reference to human beings — the woman's curse:

gu·liŋ ʒem (or *ʒeṛ*) may thy innards be devoured! an alternative, I believe, of identical meaning being: *gutsi·riŋ ʒem!* (°*-tsi·r* intestine etc.). (A later authority says that °*-uliŋ* is used of dead animals, °*-uliṣo* of living ones).

u·l, ul, (inside). — *u·l nɛ* inwards; + abl. to the inside of, on the inside of. *qau ɛčai.i u·l nɛ* he calls out to inside (the house). 164.6. *Xa·n Wali Šrka·ritsum ul nɛ Murkuš* . . . inside (i.e. up the valley from) the X.W. tower, Murkush . . . 252.23. *Hasanaba·dtsum ul nɛ itɛ bər* the nullah on the inside of (i.e. behind and above) H. 238.3. *telatsum ul ne Šišpərɛ xa* thence inwards (i.e. up the nullah) as far as Sisper. 238.5. (*u·l* cp. *u·lo; nɛ* Ppn. of *ɛtas*, v. §§ 408.4, 416).

342 ●ˈ*ulači* "clean place in the house for keeping flour in". — *ˈulačɛ.ər dˈemičan* they pour (the water) out in the "*ulači*". 314.4. (A later authority says the word denotes the innermost, private part of a house).

000 *ula·nas, ulˈanas* N., *ula·-*, Impv. *ulˈan*, to be able. — *jɛ mu nɛ̄ ula·ya ba,*

52 b

[see corrigenda et addenda, category 116, p. 541-Analyst]

000 (Probably connected with *-ʌrʌs. Cp. d*-ʌrʌs in ts.hil dewrʌs).

● 341 yowrći, yɔwrći -ŋ y a narrow section of the floor space at the lower end of the living-room (of a "Wakhi" pattern house) which is sunk somewhat below the level of the rest of the floor. Persons entering the house pass from the door into this space, and before advancing further strangers salute the master of the house, who will be seated on the superior platform (uyuwm mʌn) to the left of it. — yowćilo dʌldi.ʌn standing in the lower end of the room. 340.2.

(Correct the translation given with the text accordingly).

000 *-yuw, pl. of 2. *-i, q.v. V. also *-ʌk *-yu, sons. 20.3, 34.2,13, 260.1,18, 250.2. *-yugušʌnts, pl. of *-ʌ.ś, q.v. daughters. 116.3 ff., 180.12 ff.

1> yuwk -ʌnts x bier (like a ladder), IUB bedstead or wooden frame (for removing dead body), H. murda leyaneka čarpai ya lakri. — yuwkʌţe itewmʌn they carried him off on a bier. Cp. 92.5.

(Cp. perhaps Sh. yuwko, a kind of bier).

yuwlgrš, pl. yuwlgi.ʌŋ y. (The form of *-ulgrš with the Pn. Pf. -i).

1. Nest (birds', wasps', bees'), burrow, hole, den. — čhine yuwlgrš the bird's nest. hʌn čhinʌne ɔsko yuwlgi.ʌŋ bitsʌn one bird has three nests. (But: ɔsko čhiyus uwlgi.ʌŋ the nests of three birds). "šrqɔre yuwlgrţɔr guwriŋ ɛdrl'i" senam they have said: "Don't put your hand in a wasps' nest", i.e. beware of, have nothing to do with, So and So. šrqɔre yuwlgrš also an epithet applied to a very talkative

386 b

1 [see corrigenda et addenda category 116, p. 544 - Analyst]

These chambers were once living rooms and bedrooms. 344
It reminded me of a penthouse. While it didn't have an 644
elevator to whiz you upwards in a matter of seconds
or the best in modern plumbing, it did have the air,
the view, the history and fascination that no penthouse
in creation could match.

Back about 400 years ago one of the rulers of Hunza [173]
married a daughter of the King of Baltistan who, as [648]
a gift to his daughter and her husband, dispatched 500
workmen from his country to Hunza to erect the Baltit
Fort that we now know. The rulers of Hunza dwelt
in that fort and made it their palace until recent times.
The present Mir, too, when he took office after the [712]
death of his father, resided in this palace known as
Baltit Fort.

The new palace, in which we were being wined, [122]
dined and entertained, had been completed recently
and was taken possession of by the present Mir about
7 years ago. Actually though, the new palace was
started by the Mir's grandfather back as far as 1925.

While we were guests at the palace, extensive ma-
sonry work was in progress as the Mir was having a
broad, low, stone-walled veranda erected. This, I un- [692]
derstand, would be used, on completion, as his court, [643]
where the citizens of Hunza would come with their
problems and where the Mir would preside in judg-
ment.

However, this work in no way interfered with the [342]
normal functions of the household, for, even as the
people of Hunza follow the custom of moving upstairs
for the summer and downstairs for the winter, so did
the Mir.

To me, however, old Baltit Fort was an edifice of
distinction, charm and beauty and if I were in the
Mir's place, I would never have abandoned it.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

and up and down the dangerous rivers. Yes, even the yak bones and horns are never wasted. Picks are fashioned from them. They even find their way into the walls of the homes of the people of Hunza, for they are lighter than stones.

Still I haven't yet mentioned what is generally accepted as the yak's most important contribution to the lives of the people in the highest mountain ranges in the world . . . and that is from the little green herbage they get, they give a good quantity of rich milk, from which is made the famous yak butter. Then last and perhaps even most important, it is butchered for its good quality, health-sustaining meat.

Even the yak tails are useful . . . as brooms or dusters . . . and many are shipped to the Western world and used as Santa Claus beards. And they do make the best Santa Claus beards of all. I know—I have a couple!

Now after you have had a chance to read these qualifications, perhaps you, too, will share my admiration and appreciation of the world's most useful animal.

I was up bright and early the morning I was to go to meet the yaks. Yes, it was just 6 o'clock when I was walking down the enclosed staircase towards the Mir's palace—leaving Cecil asleep, as he still had to remain in bed as the doctor had advised.

I met Jahangir coming from the other guest house and he joined me. We had agreed the previous night to be up at 6 but I never expected that it would work out right on the beam, as it happened in this instance.

So down we went along the stone staircases from one garden level to another until we reached the Mir's palace and then we began to climb up the long wooden staircase again.

As usual, the Mir was there to welcome us, along

361 sides. Few, if any, Hunza homes are ever built where the land can be tilled. Usually the site that is selected for a home is part of a rocky promontory or some other location where the land could not be used for crops. They just can't afford to use a piece of tillable soil for a homesite.

342 The houses or homes are usually built of stones or rocks. No cement or any other binding compound is used. Yet the homes seem sturdy enough to stand most anything. I also saw some that were built of clay.

342 231 The lower floor of the Hunzan house is usually divided into two sections. One section has either no roof over it or just a part roof or covering and there is an opening in the wall, but no door. This is where the animals are kept. The Hunzan pasture and forage supply doesn't allow for the larger beasts. The cattle of Hunza are the diminutive kind, bred and selected for their dwarfishness, so that they will require less feeding, but still yield an abundant udderful of rich milk. This applies to goats, sheep and cows. The partial covering over the courtyard is so that the animals will have some form of protection overhead.

342 Then beside this is the house proper, probably half again as large . . . maybe 12 or 14 feet square.

The Hunzan farmer steps from his home into the stable, so to speak. This, of course, would horrify the people of America but it is not to be regarded as a sort of calamity, as utter degradation, or as a matter of filth and ill health, because this system is practiced in most other parts of the world even at the present time.

231 795 The Hunzans, being Mohammedans, do not raise pigs. Therefore they don't have the conditions that pigs would create.

356 I'm sure that I visited many of these courtyards and

I don't think I was struck by any unpleasant or bad odors. No doubt you would assume that being a farmer, the excrement of animals wouldn't offend me and in saying that you'd be very, very right, but even with a city man's view, I don't think you would have found the Hunzan barnyards smelly or dirty. 356

The roof of the living quarters is just high enough so that a tall man can stand up in it without bumping his head. The Hunzan roofs usually have heavy timbers strung across—at least 3 inches thick and placed about 12 inches apart. They have to be that thick and heavy because on top of this is laid earth. Practically every home has an earthen roof. The floor, too, is of hard earth that has been pounded through years of use, until it is a good sound firm floor that can be readily swept and kept clean. 342

Apart from the Mir's palace, every other home that I visited in Hunza and in Nagir had earthen floors. Now naturally one wouldn't expect an earthen floor to be spic and span or shine and glisten the way a good hardwood floor can be made to shine and glisten. These earthen or clay floors can be made smooth and even be polished, and it is actually done.

Often the room is divided off to allow for a storage room, where the dried apricot stones and other fruits and vegetables are kept for winter use. [251]

In the center of the room a hole is dug and often stones are laid at the bottom. Here the fire is laid and this is how they keep warm during the winter and where they do their cooking. Above is a hole about 18 inches square to allow the smoke to escape. The people sleep on the floor within warming distance of the fire. Beds in the average Hunzan homes are unknown, but they have bed rolls or other cloth contraptions to make the floor softer. Some of the wealthier or well-to-do [354] 513 352 352

352 Hunzans have charpoys. Most homes have a chest, or two or three or more, in which they store and keep their belongings. The chests are used to sit on and perhaps eat off. The Hunzan home we visited had a table also.

513 286 Every Hunzan home has blankets for covering during the winter and these blankets are made of homespun wool which is carded, loomed and woven by the villagers. They are equal in weight and warmth to the best blankets that are made in the West. There is no danger of the blankets not being 100 per cent wool, because wool they can get from the sheep or yak's backs.

342 Practically every Hunzan home has an upstairs, too, and this is where the family lives during the summer. It is related that each spring on the 21st of March the family moves upstairs. When there are 4 or 5 members in the family the upstairs is usually divided into two sections or rooms, leaving an open balcony in the center.

342 512 The usual Hunzan home is a place to shelter the family against storms, rain, cold and snow. It is not used nearly as much for social intercourse as it is in the West. Therefore, they don't spend as much of their time in the homes. Practically all daylight hours during spring, summer and fall are spent in the fields.

164 Some authorities attribute the good health of the Hunzans to the fact that most of their time is spent out in the open air and sunlight. Could it be that we in the West spend too much of our time inside our comfortable homes and not sufficient outside in the glorious outdoors? This is something worthy of thought and study.

Considering the heights, the ledges, the precipices and steep inclines that are found throughout this country, it is remarkable that there are few cases of injury like broken or fractured limbs, serious accidents due to falling and such. But you must remember that from infancy, children are trained and learn how to

361 didn't just spring up overnight. By the appearance of
[342] the stone and mud houses, as well as all other features about the city, it was obvious that the city had been there for a long, long time.

Gilgit is indeed a strange city. It is one of these places that is right in the middle of nowhere, but to that mountain-harnessed area, Gilgit is a mighty important, strategic spot. Somehow I had the feeling that if there was a place called the "crossroads of the East" Gilgit had the sole right to the appellation, for through Gilgit would pass caravans from China, as well as travelers from Russia, Afghanistan, Persia, India, Pakistan and yes, undoubtedly from all other parts of the Eastern world.

000 While I did see quite a bit of the city and the surrounding country, I regret today that I didn't dig a little deeper and get about even more. I think Gilgit has many interesting stories to tell . . . how could it be otherwise? And if I ever go back (and I intend to) I would like to be the one who brings these tales to light!

121 The Gilgitis, from a health standpoint or from ap-
[164] pearance in general, did not impress me one bit. The people were somewhat similar to what you would find or expect in Pakistan or India. However, the moment I crossed the bridge over the Gilgit River and got into the hills, I resolved to concentrate, coldly and with deliberate calculation, on every individual we met. So many confusing and contradicting statements had been made about the people of Hunza, that I was firmly resolved that if study and scrutinization and observation would do the trick, then I would find out the truth.

124 Akbar was keeping pace with Cecil most of the time, while Sherin was with me, and I questioned him closely about every person that we happened to meet or pass. I had no trouble—none whatsoever—in spotting a Hun-

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

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[p.390-B1]

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Hunzan houses have no chimneys—just a hole in the roof for smoke to escape.

[p. 390-B2]

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

out the services of a guide. 122

I can assure you that the Commander carefully selected the man, too. Although he looked like a boy, he was tall—about 6 feet 2 inches—lithe, alert, in fact, as smart and as capable a type of human being or soldier or both as 'twould be possible to find anywhere. Not that Jahangir needed it, but he certainly was in "high caliber" hands.

Bearing in mind that the two ponies we had were stallions, I began to wonder if we might not have some trouble on the trail, because Jahangir's mount was a mare. To you, this may not appear to be a genuine source of worry, because in the West the horses used for riding are practically always gelded and this eliminates any risk of difficulty. So you either ride a mare or a gelding. 122 492

I thought to myself, "What would happen if either one of our stallion ponies began to get ideas on some of these high tortuous, winding mountain trails?" I knew from my reading that it does happen. 122

A man can work himself up into quite a stew by thinking of such things, and by now I was greatly worried about what would happen if my black stallion did become rambunctious on the trail. So I made up my mind that I would give that mare as wide a berth as possible.

I buried my worries by getting busy and snapping a few pictures of the type of houses that we found here at Aliabad. They didn't differ very much from those we found elsewhere. They were not as well built and as clean as those we had found at Altit, but they were still quite neat and tidy by most other standards. Practically all the houses are built one on top of the other, as close together as the undulating region would allow, and it sure was obvious that a person couldn't 342 [126] [361]

keep many secrets from his neighbors. From what I saw, it was obvious that when a house was built in Hunza no attempt was made to level the ground but it was allowed to stand as nature made it and the house was erected according to the natural levels, dips, falls or heights.

As we wandered around the little Hunzan homes in this area, we had to climb up to get to this one, we had to drop down to examine that one and there were really no two on an identical level.

Then I remembered that the average annual rainfall in Hunza was 2 inches and to myself I thought, "Mighty good thing, because if it rained any more than that, what a quagmire this area would be!"

We heard the clatter of hooves and, looking up, we saw Jahangir's guide coming back and leading another horse. This meant we'd be ready to take off in a couple of minutes, so Cec and I worked our way towards the road.

Soon all of our belongings were firmly balanced on the horse's back and we were ready to start for the Hasanabad Bridge.

41 Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burusho AV7

181 829 ness of their uncomfortable houses leaves an indelible mark on the national character.

342 [351] It must be remembered that a house in the Hindu-Kush has no glass windows, no comfortable fire-place and chimney corner. The better-class houses are built round a courtyard, but the rooms rarely have windows, all light comes from the 354 open door or from a skylight. Immediately below 352 the skylight is a square open hearth, on which smoulders a fire; round this run raised platforms, on which are the beds and household paraphernalia; the smoke, before escaping through the roof, fills the whole room, blackens walls and pillars, and chokes the un- 132 fortunate inhabitants. If it is very cold, or raining and snowing heavily, the skylight is shut, the room is in pitchy darkness but for a sputtering torch, and the atmosphere horrible. It is no wonder that an existence under these circumstances should be rather depressing, and in Nagar the people get the full benefit of it, for there are several villages which during December and January only get twenty 461 minutes' sun a day; some, I believe, get none. The men having no agricultural work on hand, owing to the land being frost-bound, there is practically nothing for them to do during the winter months but to sit idly round their smouldering fires for about sixteen hours out of the twenty-four.

133 487 Nagar has practically no outlet except down the river to Gilgit. Shut in to the east by impassable mountains, and to the south by the great Rakapushi range, there is only the bare possibility of reaching 487 Baltistan by the Hispar pass: there is a tradition that the road was once used, but it is very doubtful if

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burusho AV 7

villages and of cultivation, the terraced fields carried right down into the river bed. Hunza itself lies on the right bank of a ravine ending in a dark glacier, from whose melting ice is supplied the channel which waters the whole of the Hunza cultivation. The houses of the main village are clustered tier upon tier on a high spur crowned by the Thum's Castle. The arrangement at Nagar is precisely the same.

Our entry into Nagar was very similar to my last year's entry into Chitral, only that the crowd was on a smaller scale, the courtiers not so numerous or so brilliantly arrayed. Still it was picturesque enough; before us rode a man bearing a scarlet and white banner; around us, wherever the road permitted, was the gay crowd in Bokhara silks or dirty woollen home-spun. The usual irregular salute was fired as we reached the polo ground, and the band made discordant music. Raja Jafr Khan could not receive me, being paralysed, so we moved without further ceremony into our camp by the polo ground, preceded by Raja Uzr Khan, who showed, by riding before us, a lack of breeding which scandalised the other Rajas, and which compared very unfavourably with the Mehtar of Chitral's courtesy.

Next morning I paid my state visit to Raja Jafr Khan. The road runs up through the village to the Thum's Castle, under a succession of easily defensible doorways, which would make an assault very difficult for bad troops or local enemies. The Palace stairs consisted of the trunk of a tree with notches cut in it, which led up through a square hole in the floor to the terraced rooms above. In this, as in every other house I ever entered in these wilds, the last two of

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burushe AV 7

644 three doors are placed in the right angle turn of a
342 very narrow passage which only one man can use at a time, and the doorways are so low that a tall man has to bend almost double to pass through them. The object is to prevent a rush, and to make it impossible for a man to use his weapons as he passes through the last doorway. Similarly the ascent to the flat-topped roof of a man's house is jealously guarded, and he who considers himself in any danger never sleeps twice in the same part of his room, for the skylight gives an enemy a convenient point of vantage from which to shoot.

643 We found the Thum in a typical square room,
159 with an open skylight, and a sunk hearth in the floor, seated by a balconied window, from which there was an extensive view over his country. His beard was carefully dyed, and it was difficult to guess his age, but he was not an old man; drink and debauchery had reduced him to his present state, and paralysed him
644 from the waist down. We did not stop long, as the visit was merely one of ceremony, and the audience room was full of people, before whom business could not be discussed. Our uniforms were a source of much interest to our hosts, and of considerable discomfort to ourselves. Frock coats and spiked helmets, high boots and spurs, sword and sabretache, are not quite the thing for the grand staircases of the
[534] country. Later in the day Uzr Khan paid me a visit,
644 and we had to sit through an interminable dance pro-
535 gramme, which, as the orchestra consisted of six pairs of kettle-drums, six large drums beaten at both ends, and three pipes, was simply deafening. The dances were all very much the same—six or eight men